

December 11: The Quandong trees at No. 1 group are nearly all in blossom, some heavily. A tree which I had referred to as "barren" is now heavily in blossom, for the first time for some years.

On December 12 I examined the Dodder plant Quandong and found it to be heavily in blossom. However the Dodder vine, which is laden with large dull green berries, is taking its toll of the tree. Its crown is now almost bare of leaves where the Dodder is entwining it; only the outer branches have leaves and blossoms.

A culinary note: Quandong fruit is very nice to eat, and many delicious and interesting recipes may be made from them. Quandong pies, with cream added, are delicious. Quandong puree, jam, preserves and chutney have all been tried and found very good. Recently Dr. Buttrose sent me a jar of dried Quandongs in sweet sherry, to be eaten direct or sweetened with sugar and cream added. They were delicious. The kernel from the Quandong nut is also nice to eat and may be roasted lightly in cooking oil and salt sprinkled over them.

## BIRDS OBSERVED ON A VISIT TO BERNIER ISLAND IN SEPTEMBER 1977

By MAX HOWARD, Carnarvon.

### INTRODUCTION

Bernier Island is the northern-most island in the Shark Bay group of islands and together with Dorre Island it forms an "A" Class reserve, number 24869 for the conservation of flora and fauna. It lies about 30 miles west of Carnarvon.

On September 20, 1977, Michael and Irene Morcombe and myself departed Carnarvon on the Nor-West Whaling boat *Boullanger*, to attempt to photograph if possible the Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) and the White-breasted Sea-Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*), which are abundant on the island. We arrived on the island at 1700 hours the same day, and camp was set up in the bay just north of Redcliff Point. We departed the island at 0730 hours on September 24.

The area searched from the campsite was about 2 miles north, 3 miles south and half mile west.

### LIST OF BIRDS OBSERVED

Silver Gull, *Larus novaehollandiae*. The most common gull, found in large numbers around the shore line and offshore rocks.

Pacific Gull, *Larus pacificus*. Very common around shore line and offshore rocks. Very few immature birds sighted.

Pied Oystercatcher, *Haematopus ostralegus*. Appeared to be the more common of the oystercatchers. One nest located with one egg on the beach near campsite.

Sooty Oystercatcher, *Haematopus fuliginosus*. Several birds sighted on most days south of Redcliff Pt.

Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*. Common on parts of the island visited, three pairs sighted within three miles of campsite. One pair attempted nest building and another nest located with two young about one month old.

White-breasted Sea-Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucogaster*. One nest containing two large young about two months old, located about half mile south of Redcliff Point.

Welcome Swallow, *Hirundo neoxena*. Very common on parts of island visited.

Australian Pipit, *Anthus novaeseelandiae*. Another common bird observed mainly on the beach at our campsite, and in the thicker scrub.

Little Falcon, *Falco longipennis*. One bird only observed flying south along cliff face on the first day of our visit. However it was heard calling on all subsequent days, and it was observed flying away from cliff face, just north of our campsite.

Pied Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax varius*. The only cormorant sighted during our stay. It appears to be very common on the rocks, and off-shore islands.

Turnstone, *Arenaria interpres*. The most common wader observed on all days on the island, observed on both rocky and sandy coastline.

Variiegated Wren, *Malurus lamberti*. Appears to be common on all parts of the island visited. A number of brightly coloured males were observed.

Singing Honeyeater, *Meliphaga virescens*. Several birds sighted during our stay, and appears to be a common species.

Reef Heron, *Egretta sacra*. One bird sighted (grey phase) on off-shore island just south of Redcliff Point.

Whimbrel, *Numenius phaeopus*. One bird sighted on foreshore south of Redcliff Point.

Grey Plover, *Pluvialis squatarola*. One bird sighted on the foreshore south of Redcliff Point.

Crested Tern, *Sterna bergii*. Several birds sighted flying a short distance out to sea from our camp on most days.

Red-capped Dotterel, *Charadrius ruficapillus*. Appeared to be a common bird on the foreshore, several parties of birds observed on all days.

Field Wren, *Calamanthus fuliginosus*. This bird was observed on all days, heard calling on numerous occasions and would appear to be a common species, although it keeps well hidden in the small scrub.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my thanks to Mr. Dave Dempsey and the crew of the *Boullanger*, without whose help the trip would have been impossible. The Fisheries and Wildlife Authority, Perth, gave us permission to visit the island.

#### REFERENCE

MEES, G. F. Birds of Bernier and Dorre Island, 1962, *Fauna Bulletin No. 2 Fisheries and Fauna Department*.

### FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Chestnut-breasted Finch, *Lonchura castaneothorax*, at Osborne Park.**— During the last few years the Chestnut-breasted Finch has been sighted at Osborne Park, usually feeding on the seeds of Winter Grass (*Poa annua*) growing in a patch of cultivated tomatoes near the edge of a sedge covered swamp. The garden is irrigated summer and winter.

In August 1973 I saw six birds, and again in September 1975 when I counted 40 individuals, which remained in the area until the beginning of December. In July 1976, a similar sized flock was seen in my area.

On July 3, 1977, 18 birds were counted feeding in a fairly tight group on green Winter Grass seeds growing thick amongst the tomato plants. When these finches were flushed off the ground they flew short distances before landing on the tomato stakes, and then one by one would alight on the ground to continue feeding. An adult male specimen with small gonads was collected on this day, now in the Western Australian Museum. (Registered number A15099).

On July 7, 1977, only seven birds were counted. As I watched this small group feeding, I noticed a large male feral cat stalking the finches only a metre or two from the unwary birds. This species has recently been recorded at Herdsman's Lake, about 2 km south of my locality.

Presumably these birds comprise a breeding flock of escapees from local aviaries.

—NICHOLAS KOLICHIS, Osborne Park.